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RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2368
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 2566
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 5744
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 1212

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: PRT/LASHKAR GAH - MOUSA QALA DISTRICT CHIEF
AND ELDERS WELCOME UK DEPLOYMENT

REF: KABUL 735

KABUL 00001353 001.2 OF 003

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Mousa Qala district chief Mohammed Wali and tribal elders told visiting UK PRT liaison officer, poloff, Poppy Elimination Program (PEP) officer, and USAID representative on March 23 that they are looking forward to better security when UK and Afghan National Army troops deploy in the province. The elders suggested several high priority projects and expressed disappointment with the lack of assistance from the government and the PRT. Poppy fields, some flowering, were visible within 50 meters of the district compound. Earlier on March 23, the district police chief was killed by one of his own policemen in an apparently personal dispute. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) As part of its outreach effort to Helmand Province's districts, UK PRT liaison officer Major Shaun Pendry led a mission to Mousa Qala to meet with the district chief and the council of tribal elders. Among the tribal elders was Haji Mohammed Naeem, a member of the Provincial Council (PC), who lives in Mousa Qala. PRT poloff and USAID representatives accompanied the UK mission. The mission included an approximately 1.5 kilometer foot patrol from the helicopter landing location to the district center via the town bazaar. The foot patrol drew a large crowd standing along the road, in shops, and on roofs.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE'LL DO

¶3. (SBU) Major Pendry explained that the UK's top priority is security. He noted that improving security is a prerequisite for the overall goal of improving development and governance in Helmand province. The deployment of over 2,000 UK troops, co-located with an ANA brigade, will bring better security to all parts of Helmand, he said. Typically, a joint UK-ANA mission will involve spending a week in a specific district, engaging the local population and officials and conducting joint patrols. The intent is to prevent Anti-Coalition Militia (ACM) from moving through Helmand with impunity.

¶4. (SBU) With respect to development, the UK mission will include a representative of the Department of International Development. However, the approach will be to channel funds mainly through national government agencies who will work through their provincial counterparts. The UK PRT will not implement a large number of projects directly, which has been the approach of the U.S. PRT.

¶5. (SBU) Regarding opium cultivation, Major Pendry told the attendees that, the UK forces will have nothing to do with poppy eradication; this is the purview of the Government of Afghanistan. He urged the elders to pass this word to their tribes/villages. PEP officer Steve Romilly added that, his role is to work with the Afghan members of

KABUL 00001353 002.2 OF 003

the PEP team and assist the Governor in his opium control efforts, especially in public information outreach.

SECURITY ASSISTANCE WELCOMED

¶6. (SBU) District Chief Mohammed Wali said that the security situation in Mousa Qala had deteriorated over the past year. Thus, the UK/ANA deployment is most welcome. Taliban are active in the area, he added. Sangin, the district neighboring Mousa Qala, is essentially under Taliban control, Wali noted, and this impacts Mousa Qala. Elders echoed the district chief's comments. Provincial Council member Haji Mohammed Naeem said that security must be addressed in the district is to move forward.

DEVELOPMENT: WE'RE DISAPPOINTED

¶7. (SBU) The tribal elders, led by the district chief, said they were disappointed with development in the province. PC member Naeem said that the national and provincial governments have done nothing for Mousa Qala since the fall of the Taliban. They noted several priority projects. (Note: They presented this list to the PRT in February - see refTel. End Note.) Their priorities include a dedicated power line to take advantage of the Kajaki dam as well as road and irrigation improvements. They also criticized the PRT for not fulfilling what they termed promises made under the first PRT commander to undertake some of this work. Finally, they reiterated their criticism of the recently completed bazaar road, claiming that the

contractor performed substandard work. (Note: Despite Major Pendry's request, the district chief declined to show us the road. End Note.)

18. (SBU) Discussing development, USAID representative Josh Kefauver informed the district chief and elders that USAID is working with the provincial government to start a cash for work program that will begin within the next two months. Rehabilitation of the Mousa Qala to Gereshk junction road and the Naw Zad to Gereshk road have been approved as cash for work activities. Kefauver appealed for the district's assistance in providing security for the planned projects. District chief Wali said that cash for work projects are very important; he pledged to provide security for those activities.

COMMENT

19. (SBU) The district chief and tribal elders appeared to appreciate the UK outreach. As we have heard in other district visits, security is at the top of everyone's agenda. Disappointment with Afghan institutions that have proven generally

KABUL 00001353 003.2 OF 003

unresponsive for the past 4.5 years is also a typical complaint. Complaints about PRT activities are not new, but at the end of the day, the public sector must demonstrate to its citizens that it can provide some tangible benefit.

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